

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 039120

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 39120 ACTION LUXEMBOURG INFO SECRETARY
BONN LONDON PARIS BRUSSELS THE HAGUE COPENHAGEN DUBLIN ROME
18 FEB

QUOTE

S E C R E T STATE 039120 TOSEC 040066

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LU

SUBJECT: LUXEMBOURG AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON COUNSELOR
SONNENFELDT

1. LUXEMBOURG AMBASSADOR MEISCH CALLED ON COUNSELOR
SONNENFELDT FEBRUARY 17 FOR REVIEW OF EAST-WEST ISSUES.
MEISCH RAISED FOLLOWING TOPICS:

2. SALT: MEISCH CITED A FEELING IN SOME QUARTERS IN
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EUROPE THAT THE US IS TREATING SALT WITH TOO MUCH

URGENCY AND THAT THE RUSSIANS, KNOWING THIS, FEEL THAT THEY CAN INVOLVE THEMSELVES IN PLACES LIKE ANGOLA WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES. THE COUNSELOR REPLIED THAT THERE ARE TWO POINTS TO CONSIDER: 1) THE RUSSIANS HAVE ACTED AS THEY HAVE IN ANGOLA BECAUSE THERE HAS BEEN NO POWER TO CONTEST THEM ON THE GROUND. SUCH POWER IS A PREREQUISITE TO COUNTERING SOVIET ACTION, AND IT IS AN ILLUSION TO THINK THAT INDIRECT PRESSURES, WHETHER EXERTED THROUGH SALT, GRAIN, OR ANYTHING ELSE, COULD HAVE HAD A REAL EFFECT IN AN AREA WHERE THE SOVIETS RAN NO RISK. BESIDES, ANY INDIRECT PRESSURES WOULD HAVE TO BE CONCERTED WITH THE EUROPEANS WHO DID NOT SHOW A WILLINGNESS TO ACT. 2) FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NOT ENORMOUS URGENCY

ON OUR PART ABOUT SALT. WE BELIEVE THAT CONCLUSION OF AN AGREEMENT IS IN OUR, AND EUROPE'S, INTEREST BUT WE ARE NOT GOING TO ACCEPT A BAD AGREEMENT JUST FOR THE SAKE OF GETTING IT.

3. CONGRESS: MEISCH INQUIRED WHETHER CONGRESS WOULD BE MORE WILLING TO SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS IF THE EC-9 WERE, IN SOME FUTURE CASE, TO REQUEST THE US TO ACT IN CONCERT REGARDING SOME THREAT, AS, FOR EXAMPLE, IN SOMALIA. THE COUNSELOR EXPLAINED THAT THE MOOD IN CONGRESS SEEMS TO HAVE SHIFTED SOMEWHAT. THE VOTE ON ANGOLA WAS HEAVILY INFLUENCED BY HEARINGS AT THE TIME ABOUT COVERT INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES. NOW, FOR EXAMPLE, THE CONGRESS HAS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN AIDING ZAMBIA AND ZAIRE PROVIDED THE ASSISTANCE IS OVERT. CERTAINLY IN ANY FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO CONSULT WITH THE EC-9, WHETHER BILATERALLY OR THROUGH EC CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS.

4. STRATEGIC PARITY: MEISCH ASKED THE COUNSELOR FOR AN ASSESSMENT OF US AND SOVIET STRATEGIC FORCES, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF SOVIET NUCLEAR RESEARCH. THE COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT THE SOVIETS DEVOTE A FAR HIGHER PERCENTAGE OF THEIR GNP TO DEFENSE THAN WE DO AND THAT OVER THE LONG RUN THIS WILL HAVE A CUMULATIVE EFFECT. WE SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT THIS SITUATION:

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WE BELIEVE THAT EQUILIBRIUM IS BEING MAINTAINED BUT WE CANNOT STAND STILL. EVEN WITH A NEW SALT AGREEMENT WE WILL HAVE TO LOOK TO DEVELOPMENT OF OUR STRATEGIC FORCES. NEVERTHELESS, WE MUST NOT ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE MESMERIZED BY THIS ISSUE SO THAT WE IGNORE CONVENTIONAL KINDS OF CONFLICT SUCH AS ANGOLA BECAUSE WE WILL THEN DRAIN RESOURCES FROM THE AREAS WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED. WE NEED MODERN, FLEXIBLE FORCES TO MEET CRISES. WE HOPE

TO ACT WITH EUROPE ON THIS AND BELIEVE THAT STANDARDIZATION CAN HELP MAKE OUR DEFENSE EXPENDITURES MORE REASONABLE. IN SUM, WE MUST KEEP UP WITH THE SOVIETS BECAUSE THAT IS THE ONLY BASIS ON WHICH DETENTE POLICY CAN BE CONDUCTED.

5. YUGOSLAVIA: MEISCH INQUIRED ABOUT OUR VIEWS WITH REGARD TO POST-TITO YUGOSLAVIA. THE COUNSELOR REPLIED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT WHAT WILL HAPPEN. ANY MOVEMENT OF YUGOSLAVIA TOWARD THE USSR WOULD HAVE MAJOR STRATEGIC IMPACT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN. WE MUST MAKE CLEAR TO THE SOVIETS HOW SERIOUSLY WE WOULD VIEW SUCH A DEVELOPMENT. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD REACT ADVERSELY TO ANY IMPRESSION THAT

WE MIGHT TRY TO INCORPORATE YUGOSLAVIA INTO THE WEST. THE QUESTION OF YUGOSLAVIA MUST BE OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THE EUROPEANS AND THEY MUST CONSIDER WHAT TO DO AND NOT LOOK TO US TO CARRY THE BURDEN ON THIS ISSUE. WE WOULD EXPECT TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE WESTERN EUROPEANS ON THE YUGOSLAV ISSUE AND BE PREPARED FOR WHATEVER CONTINGENCIES ARISE.

6. COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN WESTERN EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS: IN REPLY TO MEISCH'S QUESTION, COUNSELOR POINTED OUT THAT WE ARE NOT UNDERTAKING A CAMPAIGN AGAINST COMMUNISTS IN WESTERN EUROPE. WE ARE RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR OUR VIEWS. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THIS IS A QUESTION EACH COUNTRY MUST DECIDE FOR ITSELF. THERE HAS BEEN EVOLUTION IN SOME WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES, SUCH AS THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN, OVER THE PAST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS. NEVERTHELESS, THE COMMUNIST PARTIES HAVE DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES AND GOALS FROM OTHER POLITICAL FORCES,
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AND THEY RETAIN THEIR ASSOCIATION WITH THE SOVIET COMMUNIST PARTY. WHILE THE COMMUNISTS MIGHT ABIDE BY DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES IN ORDER TO GAIN POWER, THEY MIGHT NOT RETAIN THEM AFTERWARDS. FURTHERMORE, NONE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN WESTERN EUROPE IS IDENTIFIED WITH SECURITY OR DEFENSE ISSUES. WE WOULD THUS BE CONCERNED BECAUSE THEIR LACK OF SUPPORT FOR MAJOR DEFENSE EFFORTS WOULD AFFECT THE BALANCE OF POWER IN EUROPE. WE WANT TO BE SURE THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THESE CONCERNS ON OUR PART. INGERSOLL UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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